

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please make the following revisions to the cited specification paragraphs:

[2] There is an increasing demand for the use of hybrid electric driven and hybrid electric assisted vehicles. Hybrid electric vehicles typically utilize electric motor driven axles which are often of a multi-axle configuration in military and specialty vehicle ~~vehicles~~-systems.

[6] The electric motors drive the gearbox assembly which includes at least a first stage gear reduction, a second stage gear reduction and a differential gear set~~third stage gear reduction~~. A ~~The~~ third stage gear reduction may also be used and comprises a two-speed reduction gear set that includes the ~~a~~ differential gear set substantially contained within the two-speed reduction gear set. A relatively lightweight and compact axle assembly is thereby provided which will benefit from an electric motor of reduced size.

[7] ~~Another axle assembly provides a third stage gear reduction which includes a single speed electric carrier.~~ Yet another axle assembly utilizes only a single electric motor for yet another vehicle configuration with minimal modification to the axle assembly.

[15] A multiple of axle assemblies 20 each includes an axle 22 driven by one or more electric motors 24. Each axle assembly 20 defines an axis of rotation D substantially transverse the longitudinal members 16 to drive one or more wheels 26. The electric motors 24 are driven by a prime mover 28, which is preferably a hybrid electric drive that powers each of the axle assemblies 20 by powering the electric motors 24. It should be understood, however, that other prime movers such as diesel engines, gas turbines among others will also benefit from~~can be utilized with~~ the present invention.

[16] Referring to Figure 2, [[a]] first and [[a]] second electric motors 24a, 24b drive a gearbox assembly 30 which drives the wheels 26 mounted to an independent suspension 27 (illustrated schematically). It should be understood that other axle configurations, such as a rigid axle, will also benefit from~~can be utilized with~~ the present

invention. The gearbox assembly 30 drives a first axle shaft 32a and a second axle shaft 32b located along axis D and contained with an axle housing 34a, 34b. The electric motors 24a, 24b are located along axes DE1 and DE2 which are substantially parallel to axis D. The electric motors 24a, 24b drive the gearbox assembly 30 which includes a first stage gear reduction 36, a second stage gear reduction 38 and a third stage gear reduction 40.

[17] The first stage gear reduction 36 is driven by the electric motors 24a, 24b. The electric motors 24a, 24b drive a drive gear 42a, 42b respectively. Each drive gear 42a, 42b drives a respective idler gear 44a, 44b. The idler gears 44a, 44b drive a driven gear 46 which is preferably a sun gear. The drive gears 42a, 42b, the idler gears 44a, 44b and the driven gear 46 are located in a plane substantially perpendicular to axis D while each defines an axis of rotation substantially parallel to axis D. The driven gear's 46 axis of rotation is axis D.

[18] The driven gear 46 preferably includes a sun gear 48 to a planetary gear set that forms the second stage gear reduction 38. The sun gear 48 drives a plurality of planetary planet gears 50 which rotate within a ring gear 52. The ring gear 52 is preferably fixed within a second stage housing 54.

[19] A multiple of pins 56, which each define an axis of rotation for a corresponding of each of the planetary planet gears 50, is are supported upon a planet carrier 58 which is supported upon bearing 60 which rotateses within the second stage housing 54. The carrier 58 drives the third stage gear reduction 40 through an input side gear 62a which is coaxial with axis D.

[20] The third stage gear reduction 40 is preferably a two-speed reduction gear set 64 that includes a differential gear set 66 substantially contained within the two-speed reduction gear set 64. which drives aA first differential axle side gear 68a mounted to drives the first axle shaft 32a and a second differential axle side gear 68b which drives the second axle shaft 32b.

[21] The differential gear set 66 is preferably nested within the two-speed reduction gear set 64. For further understanding of other aspects of the third stage gear reduction 40 and associated components thereof, attention is directed to United States Patent Application No. 10/ 10/630,417 (Express Mail No. EV221419178US), entitled TWO-SPEED GEARBOX WITH INTEGRATED DIFFERENTIAL, which is assigned to the assignee of the instant invention and which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety. A relatively lightweight and compact axle assembly is thereby provided which will benefit from an electric motor of reduced size.

[22] Referring to Figure 3, an axle assembly 20' provides ~~a third stage gear reduction 40'~~ ~~which includes~~ a single speed electric carrier that includes the differential gear set 66 that otherwise operates as described with reference to the Figure 2 two-speed electric carrier. The single speed ~~carrier electric third stage gear reduction 40'~~ is particularly preferred for a vehicle which, for example only, is of a lighter weight and/or which requires less off-road capability.

[23] Referring to Figure 4, another axle assembly 20" utilizes only a single electric motor 24a to illustrate that the axle assemblies 20, 20' of Figures 2 and 3 are module in nature. In other words, the first stage gear reduction 36 of the axle assembly 20" eliminates the electric motor 24b, drive gear 42b and idler gear 44b to provide a relatively lighter duty axle assembly 20" for yet another vehicle configuration without major modification to the axle assembly 20'. Axle assembly 20" otherwise operates as described with reference to the Figure 3 ~~and 4~~-axle assembly assemblies. It should be understood that various combinations of the axle assemblies described herein may be provided to particularly tailor an axle assembly to a particular vehicle in a modular manner.